

Burlington Planning Commission

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Andrew Saba
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Andy Montroll
Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur
Vacant, Youth Member



Burlington Planning Commission Minutes

Tuesday, June 25, 2013 - 6:30 pm

Present: H. Roen, A. Saba, A. Montroll, B. Baker

Absent: J. Wallace-Brodeur, L. Buffinton, Y. Bradley

Staff: S. Thibault, D. White, E. Tillotson

I. Agenda

No changes.

II. Public Forum

B. Baker opened the public forum at 6:35pm.

Sharon & Steve Litwhiler would like further information about new amendments; lot line adjustment, garage size and orientation, etc.

D. White: They were approved by the City Council on June 10th. There were many items on the agenda including the airport.

S. Litwhiler: There was not obvious information that there was more to the agenda although the public hearing agenda indicated there were other items.

D. White: He will contact the Litwhiler to make an appointment to come by to discuss the amendments in relation to the property.

B. Baker: Closed the public forum at 6:40pm.

III. Report of the Chair

None

IV. Report of the Director

The Director presented the following report:

- There is a lot going on and a lot of the activity seems to be concentrated in the Pine Street corridor area with many possible aspects being discussed: alternative scenarios, evaluations of traffic safety, urban design perspective, and more.
- Today, tomorrow, and Thursday, Global Green, a technical assistance group for the Environmental Protection Agency, is visiting City, funded by a grant. The Director and the Comprehensive Planner were on site walks this morning with the group. There will be a community workshop tomorrow night involving discussion of LEED standards relating to commercial development, specifically performance of the building, infrastructure elements.

H. Roen: Are there specific goals?

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on July 9, 2013.

D. White: Global Green will provide a report at end of the project with short, medium and long-term items. The City needs to get ahead in this area and this approach to planning. The Group is looking at superfund areas for perimeter development. EPA officials were present. The Superfund area will be a particularly difficult area to facilitate development.

S. Thibault: She has drafted the first draft scope of work for the Urban Preserve and is attending a meeting next week to discuss this further with other city staff. She will go to the LRPC and then to City Council with the updates.

V. planBTV – Open Space Protection plan

D. Cahill spoke to the Commission about four months ago about the Open Space Plan. He has been through the process of visiting all of the NPAs, visiting the Parks Commission, taken all information and synthesized the results into the existing updated Plan. The public outreach results were very good.

All of the new in depth information has resulted in new maps for the Plan.

Fin 1989 the Conservation Board was established and in 2000, the Open Space protection plan. A lot has been accomplished since then especially in relation to delineating natural areas. This present work is an update not a rewrite, following the original standards.

A. Shelton: Reports that part of the municipal plan was reinventoried, existing natural spaces inventoried for characteristics and opportunities to implement improvements, based on the public input.

Sites for urban agriculture, access to waterfront, wildlife corridors have been identified based on information from studies. A lot of feedback was received on improving the management of public lands. The 1999 inventory was done on a coarse scale; the present inventory refined the process.

Use of open spaces is defined by category. Natural community types are associated generally with soils type. City trails are mapped by UVM students. The green infrastructure was examined for potential use.

D. White: Would like to highlight one thing. The large lawn in front of the Follett House doesn't show on the maps.

S. Gustin: It will on the updated map.

For the urban agriculture aspect, soils potential was examined for future use. More than 2000 residences are more than quarter mile from public open space. 8700 residences are more than quarter mile from public access to the waterfront. Wildlife corridors were examined by UVM students who looked at barriers to access; there will be a study report with suggestions.

The new management recommendations will be applied to the following:

- a. Parks Master plan update
- b. Management plans
- c. Conservation Legacy fund

Education for schools and community will foster partnerships supporting green infrastructure.

S. Gustin: The Conservation Legacy program will provide updates to existing plans to implement improved decision making and improved inventory of characteristics.

S. Thibault: She will be updating the Municipal Development Plan Chapters in which the Open Space Plan is discussed and bring that along to the Commission for approval.

H. Roen: There is a lot of good information, the recommendations are good. He has mentioned before, maps that indicate the natural communities, should be reworked? It is not possible to delineate natural communities only using soils maps.

A. Shelton: The plan is not purported to be natural communities planning.

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H. Roen: The plan doesn't read that way. There are historic natural communities. He suggests areas to investigate for the potential of natural communities. And he has spoken with Jeff Severson, ecologist.

S. Gustin: The Conservation Board will meet and discuss this next Monday.

A. Shelton: She did a similar watershed plan and it does require field work.

H. Roen: The bigger picture: Liz Thompson, Eric Sorenson, categorize Vermont in natural communities. The natural community has a certain ecological profile. If there were no human intervention this is what would exist. Natural state, defining those areas that are common ones, and the ones which are more rare, is more important for habitat. This is a newer way to recognize the natural landscape but it is difficult to properly identify.

D. White: So soil conditions are an indicator?

H. Roen: Yes, and there are other subtle differences.

A. Montroll: What is the importance of this?

H. Roen: The natural communities are ranked statewide, like endangered species, some are found in Burlington.

A. Shelton: She felt these were important to include in the study for raising awareness of natural community types that a member of the public can visit and compare.

H. Roen: The listing needs reworking in reference to the natural community types. It also seems that some goals are a little vague on page 29.

D. Cahill: The community types are identified on the maps.

H. Roen: Are the bike path connections identified?

A. Shelton: They are in chapter two.

D. Cahill: He could identify probably twenty at least.

L. Ravin, UVM: Apologizes for not commenting sooner in the process. She didn't realize that there was access to the plan. She has reviewed the maps and found a couple of errors in maps G and H, which address agricultural open space and urban agriculture. First on the list: open land with potential for agricultural use. Centennial Field is developed land, not undeveloped. Next is Trinity campus with soil types of 6 & 7. The present UVM campus was developed in the 60s. Now with UVM's master plan in place, there is development of housing and sustainable landscape, edible agriculture. UVM wants to work with the City.

Third, the little areas near the jug handle; they are trying to build land banks which are more appropriate for development. There are many opportunities for green areas. Agricultural land potential is has been ignored.

Fourth is University Heights; this area has been developed; athletic fields, FSB, with bedrock outcrops that cover more than 2 percent of the area. It is full of ledge and the athletic fields also have ledge. Working with the campus master plan supports the City plan and UVM wishes that the City work with UVM. Letters on page 59 denote landbanks for development and landbanks that are slated for open space. UVM would like to work with S. Gustin and the Conservation Board.

S. Gustin: Corrections to the map will be done, landbanks are a characterization of existing space and informational only.

D. White: On the map, what is the difference between G and H?

S. Gustin: The map is the whole soils map, map G is more relevant.

L. Ravin: Didn't exactly understand the difference between G and H. UVM has extensive agricultural lands at the horticultural farm and dairy farm. She disperses letters with comments to the Board.

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on July 9, 2013.

VI. Eco-District – Portland OR

S. Thibault: She attended a three-day Eco-District Incubator workshop in Portland OR with others from the city and wanted to share what she learned with the Commission. She presented the Eco-District framework and showed pictures of what they learned from Portland, OR. There were eight communities from around the country who were invited to attend. While they were there, opportunities to explore some of Portland's innovative planning were included in their activities.

S. Thibault: Some of the other communities present were much further along in the eco-district formation process which was helpful to learn about. Other communities at the conference were: Cambridge, Oakland, Denver, Charleston, SC, Orlando, etc.

H. Roen: Would Eco districts in Burlington relate to wards?

S. Thibault: Probably not. The area that is being look at right now is the Pine Street corridor and enterprise area, where there is a lot of potential for re-development.

K. Merriman: One of Portland, OR participants is here with the Global Green group. Tomorrow night at 7pm, the group will meet with VEIC on 128 Lakeside Avenue, suite 401.

VII. Proposed Amendment

Discussion of the proposed amendment will be re-scheduled to the next meeting.

VIII. Committee Reports

None

IX. Commissioner Items

H. Roen: The Regional Planning Commission planning advisory committee has been alerted of the Park Master plan that is going on. He believes it is essential to go early in process to the Regional Planning Commission to let them know what we are doing.

It has been difficult to get a handle on Act 250 or Act 248 projects. Could he be included in the loop on the larger projects that are proposed?

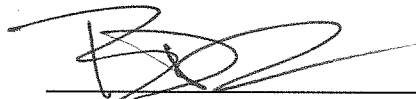
A. Saba: States his appreciation to the Commission and staff for a good learning experience. Some of it was fun. He is very grateful for the support of the Commission and staff.

X. Minutes/Communications

On a motion by A. Saba, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously accepted the communications.

XI. Adjourn

On a motion by A. Saba, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:41pm.



Bruce Baker, Acting Chair

9/24/13

Date



Elsie Tillotson, recording secretary

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on July 9, 2013.